

From: Tim Sullivan/DC/USEPA/US
Sent: 2/13/2012 1:03:37 PM
To: James Kenney/DC/USEPA/US@EPA
CC:
Subject: Re: FYI - Article re: Multimedia Inspections in Washington County

Here's another one: <http://fuelfix.com/blog/2012/02/13/epa-examining-gas-drilling-in-southwestern-pa/>

EPA examining gas drilling in southwestern Pa.

Posted on February 13, 2012 at 6:16 am by [Associated Press](#) in [Natural Gas](#), [Politics and Policy](#), [Pollution/Emissions](#)

PITTSBURGH — Federal environmental investigators examining the impact of natural gas drilling in the Marcellus Shale are focusing on southwestern Pennsylvania’s Washington County.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency began air, water and hazardous waste investigations in Washington County in late September.

EPA spokeswoman Bonnie Smith tells the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette the county was chosen because of the significant amount of drilling operations being developed there.

State reports show nearly 700 wells drilled in Washington County, with 278 in production by the middle of last year.

Smith says concerns over the potential environmental impact of drilling are behind the probe. The hydraulic fracturing drilling technique involves the high-pressure injection of mixture of water, sand and chemicals deep underground to free the trapped gas.

Smith says the investigation will take several more months.

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From: Tim Sullivan/DC/USEPA/US
To: James Kenney/DC/USEPA/US@EPA
Date: 02/13/2012 12:53 PM
Subject: FYI - Article re: Multimedia Inspections in Washington County

From the Post-Gazette: <http://shale.sites.post-gazette.com/index.php/news/archives/24317>

ing Washington County shale operations

February 2012 10:55
Don Hopey

Environmental Protection Agency is investigating whether specific Marcellus Shale drilling and compressor station operations in Washington County have caused environmental damage that violates federal regulations.

"multi-media" investigation of air, water and hazardous materials impacts, which the EPA has not previously acknowledged. The investigation began in late September when on-site testing was done and is the initial stage of a possible enforcement action or actions.

Washington County, EPA has conducted inspections at active industrial operations including well pads and compressor stations. EPA spokeswoman at the agency's Philadelphia regional office, said in an email response to questions last week.

"We are assessing the findings of our air, water and hazardous waste investigations in Washington County," said Bonnie Smith, EPA spokeswoman in Philadelphia, who noted that the agency will not disclose the names of the facility or facilities where the investigation is taking place until the investigation is complete, and that's expected to take "several more months."

Washington County, just south of Pittsburgh, is a hotbed of Marcellus Shale gas development in southwestern Pennsylvania and has more compressor stations, which pump natural gas through pipelines, than any other county in the region.

According to the latest accounting on the state Department of Environmental Protection's Oil & Gas Reporting website, there are 278 Marcellus Shale gas wells in Washington County, and as of the middle of last year 278 of those were producing.

Because the DEP does not track compressor stations by county or region, there are at least 11 in Washington County, seven of which are owned by MarkWest-Liberty Midstream & Resources LLC.

Water contamination has been a concern as deep gas drilling has rapidly expanded in Pennsylvania.

Levels of air pollutants by compressor stations -- including nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, volatile organic compounds, air particulates and carbon monoxide -- are measured in hundreds of tons per year and have the potential to adversely affect the state's air quality.

Washington County was chosen for multi-media inspections because there is a significant amount of oil and natural gas development in the area," said Ms. Smith. "While natural gas operators employ various safeguards to minimize the risks inherent to the industry, concerns have emerged regarding potential environmental impacts."

When the EPA informed the state of the federal probe, Katy Gresh, a DEP spokeswoman, declined to comment on it or say if the state is participating in it.

"Multi-media" federal investigations, which assess air, water and land impacts of various operations, are not common in Pennsylvania or other states that enforce their own environmental laws. But they are a long-standing part of the EPA "tool box,"

to the EPA program web page, multi-media investigations can target single facilities, multiple facilities owned by a single owner, or geographically based environmental problems in a given area or industry.

A comprehensive enforcement approach was used in 2002 to address emissions problems nationwide from the polyvinyl chloride (PVC) manufacturing industry.

In Pennsylvania, an EPA multi-media investigation in 2006 of the pharmaceutical manufacturer Merck & Co. in Northumberland and York counties, found company discharges violated the federal Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act, and resulted in a \$1.1 million fine paid last year to settle the charges.

The DEP also has the legal authority to step in to supplement state enforcement, much as it did in Dimock, Susquehanna County, where it is supplying replacement water and testing well water supplies in 60 homes where residents say Marcellus Shale gas drilling contaminated their water supplies. That testing is not a "multi-media" investigation because it's focused only on water quality, but it is similar due to the federal involvement.

The DEP decided to conduct the Dimock tests after receiving water quality complaints from Dimock residents, and after the DEP ordered the Gas Corp. to stop supplying replacement water.

Mr. White, D-Cecil, who has been critical of the new Marcellus legislation approved by the Legislature last week and enacted by the administration, said he was unaware of the on-going federal investigation. He welcomed it because of what he terms "federal regulation by the DEP."

"There are several areas in the county where there are potential problems that might attract the EPA," Mr. White said. "DEP's role should be motivated by facts, not politics. The EPA isn't snooping around here for nothing."

Two major gas producers, which owns the vast majority of the wells in Washington County, and MarkWest Energy Partners, which owns several compressor stations, could not be reached for comment.

The DEP said the EPA tests done in September in Washington County are not related in any way to the on-going review of drilling for natural gas that is part of the National Study of Hydraulic Fracturing, which has selected a Washington County location as a case study.

For more information, contact jdhohey@post-gazette.com. This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it.

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